

Human Terrain Mapping Background Information

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Background:

Human Terrain Mapping:

- Research and data gathering activities primarily conducted for military or intelligence purposes to understand the “human terrain,”-the social, ethnographic, cultural, and political elements of the people among whom the U.S. Armed Forces are operating and/or in countries prone to political instability.
- Includes observations, questionnaires, and interviews of groups of individuals, as well as modeling and analysis of collected data, and may become the basis for U.S. military actions.
- In addition to Human Terrain Mapping (HTM), such activities are often referred to as human social culture behavior (HSCB) and human terrain systems (HTS) studies.
- Government-funded.

DOE’s Involvement:

- DOE’s laboratories have unique computational and analytical capabilities that are critical to DoD and other federal agencies conducting HTM work.
- For this reason, responsible agencies have an interest in engaging DOE laboratories in components of their HTM efforts through Work-for-Others agreements.
- A decision was made at the highest levels of DOE that its laboratories could participate in the limited way described below.
- It is DOE policy that HTM activities engaged in by DOE laboratories will be managed as human subjects research (*though, if conducted in compliance with DOE requirements (below), the DOE laboratories’ role would typically be considered exempt human subjects research or not human subjects research*).

DOE-specific Requirements for Engaging in HTM Work:

- DOE limits the engagement of its laboratories/facilities in HTM to: 1) development of models and software for use by DoD and other Federal agencies in their analyses of collected HTM data; and 2) analysis of de-identified or publicly available datasets for such agencies.
- Statements of work for proposed HTM projects must be submitted to the Human Subjects Protection (HSP) Program Manager (Libby White, SC-23, or John Ordaz, NA-10 for the 3 NNSA laboratories), for DOE Headquarters (HQ) review and approval prior to initiation. The appropriate HSP Program Manager will engage the recognized DOE IRB, and as needed, the DOE laboratory researcher (principal investigator (PI)) and/or sponsor, in clarifying whether the project is HTM and if so, that that data to be used will be de-identified. All intelligence projects must also be approved by the Office of Intelligence (IN-10) prior to initiation.
- Once DOE HQ and IRB approvals are obtained, the PI may work with the Lab/Site Office *Work for Others* contacts to initiate the project.

- The recognized site IRB (or, the Central DOE IRB, in the case of Argonne National Laboratory (ANL)) is the only entity authorized to determine whether the HTM data received by the PI after project initiation meets DOE criteria for de-identification.

What DOE is Asking of its IRBs:

- Prior to initiation of any HTM project, review the statement of work and other informational materials. Make a determination as to whether any data to be used by the DOE laboratory in the proposed HTM effort will be de-identified. This should be the case, because of DOE's requirement that PIs use only de-identified (or publicly available) data. Even though most IRBs would typically consider research on de-identified datasets *exempt human subjects research* or *not human subjects research*, DOE is asking that its IRBs remain engaged throughout the life of the project through (at a minimum):
 - (After completing its initial review and ensuring HQ review/approval), sending a letter to the PI noting that the IRB has conducted an initial review of the SOW and that the PI may proceed with initiation of the project;
 - Once the project is initiated, engaging with the PI to: 1) discuss the datasets received from the sponsor and to ensure they are sufficiently de-identified for the PI to begin work (using DOE checklist/guidance); and 2) complete and sign a data security agreement with the PI (using DOE template). DOE can provide consultant(s) in de-identification of large datasets to assist the DOE site and Central IRBs with this effort;
 - Periodically (not less than once a year) following up with the PI to check on progress and scope of work being conducted.